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NATURALIZATION ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR ELIGIBLE RESIDENTS

SACRAMENTO - The California Department of Community Services & Development (CSD) has released a Request for Application for its Naturalization Services Program (NSP) and plans to award contracts to successful applicants in late December. The NSP provides services to assist legal permanent residents in becoming naturalized citizens.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed AB 2060 into law in September, calling for the NSP, which has been active since 1998, to be administered by CSD to provide funding to community-based organizations to assist legal permanent residents in becoming citizens. The fiscal year 2006-07 budget provides \$3 million for the program, which is expected to assist an estimated 15,000 legal permanent residents in becoming citizens.

"There are currently more than two million legal permanent residents eligible for naturalization in the state," said CSD Director Lloyd T. Throne. "The Naturalization Services Program is a good example of how community organizations provide services to local residents. Qualified legal permanent residents who wish to seek citizenship will have access to information close to home."

Thirty-one providers across the state, including community-based organizations, private non-profits, local public agencies and school districts, were funded in 2005 to provide services, including outreach, intake and assessment, collaboration with and referral to other naturalization services organizations, citizenship application assistance, citizenship testing and interview preparation and follow-up.

In addition to the state-funded NSP, CSD administers California's share of funding for several federal programs, including the Community Services Block Grant, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Weatherization Assistance Program and Lead Hazard Control Program.

For more information about CSD or the NSP, please log on to www.csd.ca.gov.

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